

“A VERY GOOD TRACK RECORD IN HIGH-SKILL AREAS LIKE PRODUCTION ENGINEERING.”

Adrienne Perry, Corporate Communications, EDS New Zealand

EDS New Zealand, a subsidiary of the US\$20.6 billion Texas-based IT outsourcing giant, was already New Zealand's number one IT outsourcing and services company. But in 2002, incoming managing director Rick Ellis had bigger plans. He recognised EDS's operations in New Zealand had many exceptional attributes: the workforce was highly skilled, well-educated, flexible and English-speaking; there was a stable political environment and a growing economy; the telecommunications infrastructure was excellent; and costs were competitive.

Rick Ellis reckoned EDS New Zealand could start handling overseas IT business as well. He applied to have New Zealand accredited to EDS's "Best Shore" initiative. This programme relocates work between international centres of excellence to achieve a high quality, cost-competitive outcome for clients. Mr Ellis had little doubt his experienced team would meet the EDS grade.

But there was another important criteria. A "Best Shore" country team had to demonstrate strong levels of government support. Mr Ellis approached Investment New Zealand and found the organisation very supportive. In March 2003, Investment New Zealand announced a NZ\$1.5 million (US\$680,000) grant to assist EDS to bring overseas work to New Zealand. "The government was wonderful," says EDS Corporate Communications Executive Adrienne Perry. "The grant was essential as a visible sign of our strong relationship with government. Investment New Zealand advised us and

facilitated the discussions. But they also worked with us in other ways, for example when we hosted clients from the Northern Hemisphere."

EDS gave its New Zealand subsidiary "Best Shore" accreditation in four major areas: production engineering, software development, information technology outsourcing and contact centre work. Since then, EDS has attracted more than 20 offshore clients. "Not only have we picked up a lot of international business, but, clients have stayed with us and given us more and more work, Ms Perry says. "We have a very good track record in high skill areas like production engineering and software development. And we are able to 'follow the sun', completing work and having it on a client's desk when they get into work in the morning."

Since 2003, EDS New Zealand has added almost 300 new staff to work on overseas business. New Zealand's skilled IT workforce means there are high calibre people available. And its excellent environment and constructive immigration laws makes it easy to attract skilled migrants to fill any technical gaps, Ms Perry says. "EDS is very happy with its decision."

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